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NITISH KUMAR AGREES TO LET SON NISHANT ENTER POLITICS

Eschewing aversion for "dynasty politics", Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday agreed to launch his only son Nishant in politics

JUBILATION AT JD(U) HEADQUARTERS IN PATNA

The announcement came from state Rural Development Minister and senior party leader Shrawon Kumar, who has been a close aide of the JD(U) supremo since the Samata Party days, in the 1990s. Party workers distributed sweets, smeared each other's faces with 'gulaal' and raised slogans to express delight over the political entry of their supremo's son

AN ENGINEER KEEN ABOUT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

- Five Rajya Sabha seats from Bihar are going to polls and the BJP and JD(U) hold two seats apiece. Nishant, known to be reticent but with a good grasp of public affairs, may replace Harivansh Narayan Singh
- Former state BJP president Dilip Jaiswal said, "If Nitish Kumar's son enters politics, it's great... time for a new generation to emerge"

48-yr-old

NISHANT IS SINGLE AND HAS A DEGREE IN ENGINEERING

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

787 The latest war toll in Iran, according to the Iranian Red Crescent

153 Countries affected in some way or the other by the war

1,039 Attacks by US, Israel across Iran. Qatar joined the pounding

An explosion in UAE's Fujairah after drone debris fell on a part of the oil industrial zone | AP/PTI

W ASIA BURNS
AS BOTH SIDES GO FULL BLAST

AGENCIES @ Tehran, Tel Aviv

THE West Asia war is showing no signs of abatement. Iran stepped up its attacks on economic targets and US missions across West Asia on Tuesday as President Donald Trump warned it was "too late" for the Islamic republic to seek talks.

As drones and missiles crashed into oil facilities and US embassies in the Gulf, Israel bombarded targets in Iran and pushed troops deeper into Lebanon to battle the Tehran-backed militia Hezbollah.

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday boasted of wide damage on Iran. "Just about everything's been knocked out," Trump said. Later, he said "someone from within Iranian regime might be the best choice to take over after the war."

As if to underline Trump's new stance, loud blasts echoed around downtown Tehran. According to Iranian media, US-Israeli strikes targeted the 'Assembly of Experts' building in Qom, housing the panel electing Iran's new supreme leader.

Israel's military said its air force struck industrial sites "throughout Iran" used to produce ballistic missiles, to pre-empt their use.

Iran soon struck the US Embassy in Saudi Arabia's Riyadh and in Kuwait City with a drone. The strike in Riyadh caused part of its roof to collapse. In Kuwait City, the vicinity of the US embassy was hit by two drone strikes from Iran, with no casualties.

With Iran bombing Gulf monarchies on whim, the US ambassador in Israel asked Americans to move out on their own. "The US Embassy is not in a position at this time to evacuate or directly assist Americans in departing Israel," Mike Huckabee wrote on X.

Earlier Tuesday, IAEA said Iran's Natanz site sustained "some recent damage", but "no radiological consequence was expected."

Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Saar urged foreign capitals to cut all ties with Tehran. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi warned Saar that Beijing opposes the strikes. P14

WAR WATCH

SAUDI ARABIA

US embassy hit by drones

An attack from two drones on the US Embassy in Riyadh caused a "limited fire". The embassy urged Americans to avoid the compound

ISRAEL

Tel Aviv hit injures 7

At least seven people were seriously wounded after a salvo of missiles fired from Iran hit the capital city Tel Aviv

QATAR

Loud blasts heard in Doha

AFP journalists in the Qatari capital of Doha heard more explosions on Tuesday, as Iran carried out a fourth day of attacks in Gulf countries

UAE

Intercepts 11 missiles

UAE said it intercepted 11 ballistic missiles and 123 drones Tuesday, while one missile landed within the country sans any casualties

IRAN

Urges UNSC to stop the war

Iran urged the United Nations Security Council to take action to stop the war. " If UNSC wishes, it can certainly act to stop the war"

Thoughts on education, public service, dissent and AI enliven TNIE's conclave

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Chennai

TNIE Editorial Director Prabhu Chawla and Editor Santwana Bhattacharya presenting a memento to West Bengal Governor Dr CV Ananda Bose at ThinkEdu Conclave; (right) Bihar Governor Arif Mohammed Khan | P JAWAHAR, ASHWIN PRASATH

WEST BENGAL Governor Dr C V Ananda Bose on Tuesday recalled a quote from the Kothari Commission Report, "destiny of India is being shaped in her classrooms", to underscore the relationship between education, public service, and nation-building at the ThinkEdu Conclave 2026 held in Chennai on Tuesday.

Speaking on the second day of the event presented by the Tata Group and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) with Rajalakshmi Group of Institutions as title sponsor, Dr Bose said that Viksit Bharat 2047 mission can be achieved only through the path of education.

Bihar Governor Arif Mohammed Khan reflected on the controversial Shah Bano case, and spoke on what it means to be a "Liberal Muslim" in India today.

Swami Suddhidananda, president of Advaita Ashrama, initiated the day's discussions with a reminder that education must also enrich the spiritual and moral centres within students. Dr Sudha Seshayyan, former V-C, MGR Medical University, also highlighted the need for value-driven education.

Dr Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit, Vice-Chancellor of JNU, Dr Sunaina Singh, former V-C of Nalanda University, and Dr Thangam Meganathan, Chairperson, Rajalakshmi Group of Institutions, stressed on the importance of responsible dissent.

Sachin Pilot, senior Congress leader, commented on the fleeting nature of political ideologies in India. Senior BJP leader Dr Tamilisai Soundarajan and DMK MP Dr Kanimozhi Somu brought the discussion closer home, highlighting the power, pains, and representation of youth in TN's charged political landscape.

Advocating for the 'Dravidian Model', Tamil Nadu School Education Minister Dr Anbil Mahesh highlighted the state's strides in inclusive education, while IT Minister Dr Palanivel Thiyaga Rajan outlined its economic success story.

Driving the importance of self-reliance in emerging technologies, Prof V Kamakoti, Director of IIT Madras, explored India's roadmap to AI sovereignty. Prof Pawan Goyal of IIT Kharagpur, and author Sairam Surenderasan explained how AI is already disrupting education.

Senior BJP leader K Annamalai called for a major overhaul in the civil services, while former TN chief secretary V Irai Anbu batted for purpose-driven public servants.

ThinkEdu 2026, with over 30 riveting sessions and 45 speakers across two days, represented the continuation of a 14-year legacy of championing the excellence of Indian thought.

FULL COVERAGE: P7

Tightrope walk for Siddu, Centre's revenue cuts will strain Budget '26-27

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

THE Centre-State stalemate is likely to continue as Chief Minister Siddaramaiah presents his 17th budget for Karnataka on Friday. The numbers show it will be a tightrope walk for Siddaramaiah, who will have to factor in deep cuts in revenue from the Centre.

The budget is likely to be marked by the state's non-cooperation on release of grants for Central schemes, and loss of revenue due to GST rate rationalization.

Allocations under Grant-in-Aid (GIA) and contributions from the Centre show a staggering negative growth of -27.25 per cent; against the budget estimate (BE) of Rs 16,000 crore, the Centre has released Rs 8,787.68crore (52.92%) up to January 2026. Besides the loss of about Rs 9,000crore revenue due to GST rate rationalisation, the State will bear a burden of over Rs 2,200crore as part of its 40 per cent share to implement the VB-G RAM-G employment guarantee scheme, and Rs 13,000crore shortfall of grants towards Jal Jeevan Mission.

The Policy and Planning Commission headed by MLA BR Patil submitted a report to the government, recommending that the budget speech include the Centre's non-cooperation with the State on funds for Central schemes, and lack of response to Karnataka's request to start an AIIMS in Raichur.

Revenue shortfall from the state is Rs 15,000crore to Rs 18,000crore for 2025-26, and is mostly attributed to the Revenue department's initiative of e-khata, which is compulsory for registration of properties. The Stamps and Registration department collected Rs 20,000cr as against an estimate of Rs 28,000cr in January. Commercial taxes also showed a bit of sluggishness (6.96 per cent growth year on year). P4

Woman dies in fire at her home in Rajajinagar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A 55-year-old woman died, while three members of her family escaped unhurt after a fire, suspected to have been caused by a short-circuit, broke out at their residence in Rajajinagar on Monday night. The woman, who was trapped in a room on the third floor, died due to asphyxiation, the police said.

The deceased, Savitha -- a homemaker, was married to Ramesh Babu DR (59), a contractor. The couple have a son, Vishrut, who is in his 20s. The family stays in a three-storey building in 2nd Stage, D Block, Rajajinagar.

The fire broke out between 9.30 pm and 9.45 pm on Monday in a room on the third floor. The ground and first floors of the house, owned by Ramesh, are rented out. The family stays in a duplex portion on the second and third floors. Ramesh and his mother, Channamma, were on the second floor watching television. P3

Govt sets up inter-ministerial group to monitor, manage crisis

PUSHPITA DEY @ New Delhi

THE Ministry of Commerce held a consultation meeting on Tuesday with key ministries, logistics operators, and trade facilitation bodies to assess potential risks to exports and imports due to the ongoing geopolitical turmoil. An Inter-Ministerial Group for Supply Chain Resilience has also been created to aid Indian exporters amid the growing geopolitical crisis.

The group comprises members from the ministries of finance, external affairs, shipping, and petroleum, to facilitate coordination monitoring and follow-up to ensure continuity in trade flows.

Some of the measures include flexibility in export-related authorisation and steps to prevent cargo bottlenecks.

With the ongoing Iran-Israel conflict, exporters fear severe disruptions in logistics, spike in freight cost and longer transit time. As a big share of India's crude oil passes through the Strait of Hormuz, fuel prices can rise.

However, government sources said India has crude oil reserves and refined petroleum products that could weather disruptions for up to eight weeks. P11

AI operates relief flights

Air India on Tuesday deployed a wide-body aircraft with 350 seats to Jeddah and another plane with 300 seats to Dubai to bring back stranded passengers

EXPRESS READ

RCB to play five IPL home matches at Chinnaswamy Stadium

Bengaluru: Defending champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru will play five home matches at Chinnaswamy Stadium and two home games in Raipur for the 2026 IPL season. Chinnaswamy will host the final, in addition to a playoff match | P17

Bear kills goat herder in Hosapete, villagers beat animal to death

Kudligi (Hosapete): A 45-year-old goat herder was mauled to death by a bear at Halasagara village in Gudekote of Kudligi taluk on Monday afternoon. Later, an enraged group of villagers tracked the animal down and beat it to death | P5

T20 HIT-WAVE
ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

Today's Match

7pm: South Africa vs New Zealand **(1st Semi-Final)** (Kolkata)

SA vs NZ: FIRST SEMIS IN KOLKATA

On Wednesday, South Africa face New Zealand in the first semifinal of the T20 World Cup. The African side has an advantage over their opponents after remaining unbeaten until now. To add to that, they even got the better of Kiwis in the group stage. More importantly they seem to be a well-rounded unit and the conditions here suit them better. P17

Pristine Bettahalasur to go to dumps? BSWML plans waste facility there

MOHAMMED YACOOB @Bengaluru

TWENTY-FOUR kilometres away from Bengaluru, around 16 villages spread across three Gram Panchayats are involved in allied agriculture activity and dairy farming, free from air, water and soil pollution.

One of them, Bettahalasuru Gram Panchayat, had won the Gandhi Puraskar in the past for best practices in waste segregation, as it achieved 98 percent waste segregation at source. The peace enjoyed by these villagers, whoever, is threatened by the notification issued by the Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML).

Last week, the BSWML issued a notification to start an 826-tonne Material Recovery Facility here, leaving villagers with the fear of pollution and groundwater contamination.

Pavithra, a resident of Tharahunise who works as an Operations Manager with Eco-Grama, an NGO involved in waste segregation in Bettahalasur GP, said the villagers fear groundwater pollution and the plant may endanger live stocks besides causing diseases like cancer, due to the daily dumping of 826 tonnes of waste for a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) at Tharahunise village.

As the news spread, villagers held a signature campaign and handed over an objection letter to the local MLA and Bengaluru Urban Deputy Commissioner to stall the project, and the Bettahalasur GP has also sent a show-cause notice to BSWML seeking an explanation on the purpose of such a facility and its impact on the village and the environment.

Pavithra said, as per the 2011 census, 15,000 voting population was found in Bettahalasur gram panchayat and says that two major water lakes, Sadenahalli lake (Rajankunte GP) and Thimmasandra lake (Bettahalasuru GP), are around 1 km from the proposed facility. P2

Nod to acquire 60 transport aircraft

JAVARIA RANA @ New Delhi

THE Defence Procurement Board (DPB) has cleared the acquisition of 60 medium transport aircraft for the IAF, setting in motion a long-pending plan to renew its tactical airlift fleet.

Sources said the DPB, chaired by Defence Secretary R K Singh, met on Monday and cleared the proposal. The board vets capital acquisition proposals before they move to the Defence Acquisition Council for Acceptance of Necessity, following which the process moves to tendering, trials, negotiations and contract award.

The acquisition, estimated at around ₹1 lakh crore, will be pursued under the 'Buy and Make' route, with 12 aircraft to be acquired in flyaway condition and the remaining 48 to be manufactured in India in partnership with the domestic industry, sources said.

File pix of C-390 Millennium

The requirement centres on replacing the An-32 fleet. The new aircraft are also expected to take on some roles of the ageing Il-76. The aircraft being sought must be capable of operating in high-altitude environments and from short, semi-prepared or unpaved surfaces, including Advanced Landing Grounds in Ladakh and the Northeast.

A three-way contest is taking shape, with each contender offering a different mix of capability and industrial alignment. Sources said the contest is expected to be closely fought between Brazil's Embraer, which has partnered with Mahindra Defence for this bid and US-based Lockheed Martin, which has a long-standing manufacturing partnership with Tata Advanced Systems.

Embraer has offered the C-390 Millennium, a jet-powered aircraft with a payload of around 26 tonnes, placing it at the upper end of the IAF's requirement. Lockheed's C-130J Super Hercules (20 tonnes) and Airbus' A400M Atlas (30+ tonnes) are also in the race.